

REMARKS

Claims 6, 38, 40, 42, and 44 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-5, 7-10, 12-23, 25, 27-37, 39, 41, and 43 are hereby canceled. Claims 6, 38, 42, and 44 have been amended. Claims 6, 38, 42, and 44 are independent claims.

Allowable Subject Matter

It is gratefully acknowledged that the Examiner has allowed claims 6 and 40, and considers the subject matter of claims 38, 42, and 44 as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Without conceding the validity of the Examiner's rejections, claims 38, 42, and 44 have been rewritten into independent form. Accordingly, claims 38, 42, and 44 are in condition for allowance.

Further, Applicants amended claim 6 in order to improve the grammar. It is respectfully submitted that the amendment of claim 6 does not substantively change the scope of the claim, but, rather, merely addresses a matter of formality.

Telephonic Interview of July 19, 2007

Applicants wish to thank Examiner Kelly L. Jerabek for taking the time to discuss the present application with Applicants' representative, Jason Rhodes (Reg. No. 47,305).

Claims Discussed: Claims 1, 5, 8, and 30

General Results: Applicants' representative presented the Examiner with a set of proposed claim amendments. Agreement was reached that the proposed amendments would overcome the rejections listed below. However, since the proposed amendments would necessitate further search, the Examiner said he is unable to enter them at this stage of prosecution.

Drawings

Attached hereto is a drawing correction to Fig. 13. It is respectfully submitted that this drawing correction merely corrects a typographical error, and is supported in the specification at page 10, 3rd paragraph. Accordingly, entry of this drawing correction is respectfully submitted in that it addresses a purely formal matter and does not add new matter to the application.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-4, 8-10, 15-20, 27, 28, 30, 31, and 33-36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,214,516 to Okino et al. (hereafter "Okino") in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0169349 to Aoi et al. (hereafter "Aoi"). Claim 29 stands rejected under § 103(a) as being obvious over Okino and Aoi, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,526,293 to Matsuo (hereafter "Matsuo"). Claim 32 stands rejected under § 103(a) as being obvious over Okino and Aoi, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,784,105 to Kawamura (hereafter "Kawamura"). Claims 5, 7, 12-14, 21-23, 25, 37, 39, 41, and 43 stand rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okino and Aoi, and further in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/011702 to Ohmura et al. (hereafter "Ohmura").

Applicants have canceled claims 1-5, 7-10, 12-23, 25, 27-37, 39, 41, and 43 without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter contained therein. The cancellation of these claims does not constitute an admission by Applicants as to the appropriateness of any of the above rejections. Further, Applicants reserve the right to file these claims in a divisional application. In view of the foregoing, these rejections have been rendered moot.

Conclusion

Entry of this Amendment After Final is respectfully requested in that the above claim amendments raise no new issues requiring further search and/or consideration. In view of the above amendments and remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to issue a Notice of Allowance in the present application.

Should the Examiner believe that any outstanding matters remain in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Jason W. Rhodes (Reg. No. 47,305) at the telephone number of the undersigned to discuss the present application in an effort to expedite prosecution.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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FIG.13

